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SUBJECT: NINEWA: MURDER OF ASSISTANT GOVERNOR WILL FURTHER DEGRADE PROVINCIAL GOVERNANCE, REDUCE U.S. ACCESS

Classified By: Ninewa PRT Leader Alex Laskaris, Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

This is a Ninewa Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) message.

¶1. (C) Summary: Assailants gunned down Ninewa's Assistant Governor for Technical Affairs September 17 outside his mosque. Shamil Younis was a prominent Sunni Arab working for Governor Kashmoula and a close contact of PRT Mosul. A distraught Kashmoula told us that Younis was the seventeenth of his senior staff members to be murdered. While the perpetrators have not been apprehended, the killing is consistent with AQI attempts to destabilize the province. In the short term, it will discourage qualified applicants from seeking senior civil service positions and dealing with the PRT and U.S. military officials. In the longer term, such violence could further degrade the quality and further reduce the ethnic diversity of provincial governance. End summary.

¶2. (C) Ninewa Assistant Governor for Technical Affairs Shamil Younis was murdered the evening of September 17. He was gunned down after prayers at a Mosul mosque. The assailants reportedly were three young men who followed him to the mosque, then waited for him to emerge. Younis was part of Governor Duraid Kashmoula's inner circle; a distraught Kashmoula told us the day after the killing that &they killed my brother, they broke one of my wings and now how can I fly?8 Younis was also a longstanding PRT contact, someone who gave us insight ) though he had limited influence ) on the process of budget execution.

¶3. (C) Although there were witnesses to the killing, there are currently no suspects. Kashmoula thinks it unlikely anyone will be held accountable for the crime. By his count, this is the seventeenth member of his staff to be murdered during his tenure. For our part, this is the second time in three months that a senior provincial official disposed to work with us has been murdered. On June 23, DG for Municipalities Khaled Mahmoud, also a Sunni Arab like Shamil Younis, was killed in similar fashion. Unlike Shamil, Khaled had an antagonistic relationship with the governor. However, Khaled and Shamil both had roles in the awarding of provincial contracts, so it is possible that one or both were targeted as a result of business disputes.

¶4. (C) Two other provincial officials with longstanding ties to the PRT and U.S. military may also be departing the scene. Mayor Najim Abdulla al-Jubouri of Tal Afar has reportedly resigned his position and is in Dahuk pursuing emigration to the United States. (Note: We do not know if he has a valid visa yet.) Mayor Zuhair Muhsin Abdul Aziz al-Araji of Mosul has told us that he is considering a similar exit. Zuhair and Najim maintain good relations with Coalition Forces and are generally responsive to the needs of their constituents, although a lack of financial support to their cities from the province has made them highly reliant on USG funding.

¶5. (C) Mosul sanitation workers were threatened by insurgents on September 12 and told that they would be killed

if they continued to pick up trash in the city. The governor and the head of the Nineva Operations Command (NOC) are currently discussing options for addressing this threat.

¶6. (C) Comment: While we don't know for sure, this incident is consistent with past murders ascribed to AQI, meant to further destabilize provincial governance. Short-term implications of Shamil's murder include: 1) the number and quality of technocrats willing to serve in the provincial government will continue to fall; 2) the number and quality of provincial government officials willing to engage with PRT and U.S. military will decline; and 3) the opacity of the budget execution process will increase, and the budget execution rate will likely slow even further. Over the longer term, the aggregate implications of the assassination of prominent civil servants, especially Sunni Arabs, are worrisome: 1) the quality of governance in an already poorly-run province will continue to drop as qualified officials leave out of fear of AQI assassination and would-be applicants avoid government service ) especially Sunni Arabs; and 2) the provincial administration may become less ethnically representative and more reliant on, and responsive to, the Kurdish Democratic Party and the KRG agenda. End Comment

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